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# DUTIES OF THE STATE

AN ADDRESS BY THE

HONOURABLE DAVID DUDLEY FIELD,

*Of the United States Bar,*

AN AMERICAN VIEW OF GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE.

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# Liberty & Property Defence League

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## REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS AND SPEECHES.

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THE Eighth Annual Meeting of the Liberty and Property Defence League was held on Monday, 10th November, 1890, in the Great Hall, Westminster Palace Hotel. The attendance included the Honourable David Dudley Field, of the United States Bar, who had undertaken to preside; Earl Wemyss, Chairman of the League Council; Lord Bramwell, the Hon. Alan Charteris, Lady Musgrave, Sir G. A. Clayton East, Bart. (Thames Riparian Owners' Association), Sir Myles Fenton (South Eastern Railway), the Rev. Dr. Charlton Lane, Colonel Montague Clementi and Mr. George Palmer, J.P. (Mercers' Company), Sir Alexander E. Miller, Q.C., Major Creswell, Captain Molesworth, R.N., Captain G. Dumaesq de Carteret Bisson, Mr. H. N. Miers, J.P., Mr. Smith (Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway), Mr. Walter Rowley (Mining Association of Great Britain), Mr. J. V. Fitzgerald (Land Corporation of Ireland), Mr. J. Danvers Power (Country Brewers' Society), Mr. J. H. Levy (Personal Rights Defence Association), Mr. R. C. Saunders (East India Association), Mr. R. C. Mitchell, Mr. A. Harvie (Hon. Sec. Brighton Branch Liberty and Property Defence League),

Mr. T. Webb (President Birmingham Licensed Victuallers Society), Mr. J. M. and Mrs. Richards, Mrs. Thomas S. Beales, Mr. E. Judge, Mrs. Simpson, Mr. Archer, Mr. G. F. G. Forbes, Mr. J. Gladding, Mr. A. Single (Secretary West Ham Property Owners Association), Mr. J. L. Blain, Mr. A. Clarke, Mr. Oswald Dawson, Mr. J. Webster, Mr. W. Dalrymple, Mr. W. Griffith, Mr. D. Smith, Mr. F. Bowers, Mr. J. Higginbotham, Miss Arnim, Mr. H. T. Banning, Mr. A. H. Bird, Mr. Walsh, Mr. B. Kisch, Mr. W. E. Montgomery, Mr. G. Kelsey, Mr. T. G. Foster, Mr. Albert Tarn, Mr. J. Dacosta (Indian Constitutional Association), Mr. H. N. Muss, Mr. H. L. Lovelock, Mr. W. M. Beaufort, Mr. W. C. Crofts, Mr. David Oliver, Mr. Frederick Millar, Mr. D. E. Oliver, Mr. M. J. Lyons, and many others.

Letters regretting inability to attend were received from Earl Fortescue, Lord Baring, Earl of Arran, Lord Coleridge, Lord Lovelace, Judge Hughes, Q.C., Mr. Seagar Hunt, Mr. H. D. Pochin, General F. Burroughs, etc., etc.

LORD WEMYSS, in opening the proceedings, said: Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to move that Mr. David Dudley Field be requested to take the chair and preside at our annual meeting to-day. (Applause.) Unfortunately, and unknowingly, we fixed upon Lord Mayor's day for our meeting, and I am sorry to say that, in consequence, a great many of our friends have been prevented from coming, have been stopped by the crowd in the way and are unable to be present. I am very sorry that unconsciously we have made this mistake. We thought that Lord Mayor's day would probably have been fixed for Saturday instead of Monday.

THE HON. D. DUDLEY FIELD then took the chair and delivered the following address :—

LADIES, MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

When the President of your League did me the honour of inviting me to preside at this meeting and deliver the annual address, though I appreciated the compliment, and found the time appointed convenient, I hesitated, nevertheless, fearing that I might be thought to have entered into a domain where I had no right to be found. But I reflected, that the principles you profess are not applicable to one country alone, but to all countries, and this reflection has brought me here.

You have named this a Liberty and Property Defence League; that is to say, a league in defence of liberty and property. But I am tempted to ask; is not your whole political fabric a league for the same purposes? Why this league within a league, why should it exist at all in a free State? For what purpose is all this array of force that we see around us, this army and this navy; this ubiquitous police; this long procession of judges filing through the great hall of the courts of justice on the 24th of October; what were and are all these but so many agencies created for the defence of liberty and property? A great English writer long ago declared that all the vast machinery of the State ended after all in putting twelve men into a jury box, to decide upon their oaths. We might change the language, and say that this magnificent fabric of government, which, through the toil and suffering of ages, you have built up in these imperial isles was created mainly for the defence of liberty and property. Why then another and a feebler

organization? Is Parliament remiss, are the judges wanting; do juries fail in their duty? These are questions that I cannot answer. You alone can do that.

It would ill become me, citizen of another country, to discuss here party questions which divide your people; and it would be equally unbecoming to bring before you questions which divide parties in America, but I can with entire propriety discuss in either country the general question of the rightful powers of this complex organization which we call the State. I use the word State instead of government, because the latter word is used in two senses, one representing the body politic as a whole, and the other representing the administration or the cabinet of the time being. My subject then will be THE TRUE FUNCTION OF THE STATE.

Let us first bear in mind how much we do for ourselves without the intervention of the body politic, and that a great part of our daily lives, perhaps the greater part, is regulated by custom, independent of law. The Dutch settlers of New York, then called New Amsterdam, were wont to refer to the "precious customs of Fatherland." So we are guided, more, perhaps, than we were wont to think, by the manner of life of those with whom we live and into whose society we were born. In our families, our occupations, and our amusements, we follow, not so much precepts of law as lessons of custom. If any of us were to ask himself at the close of a day, what of all he has done has been dictated by authority, he would probably answer that he has stayed at home or gone abroad, has worked or amused himself, at his own will and pleasure. We may thus, in our estimate of

the function of the State, lay out of view the greater portion of human actions.

Nor ought we to forget, in considering what may be demanded of the State, the immense work that is daily performed by voluntary association, prompted by sympathy. The brotherhood of men is not an empty phrase. You have in the East of London a People's Palace, built not by the Lords and Commons of England, but by the willing hands of fellow men, moved by the diviner impulses of their nature. You have the Peabody Buildings and other homes for the poor. You have, in a book just published, "Darkest England," a scheme for relieving the most destitute of the people of London; a scheme which, whether feasible or not, has attracted much attention and indicates the drift of public feeling. Surely these things are better done by voluntary associations of individuals than by the power of the State.

We may then, I think, leave out of the domain of the State all that properly belongs to the domain of custom, or the domain of sentiment. Government is neither a teacher of manners nor a charitable institution. What, then, is its true domain. It may not be easy to mark the limits for all times and all circumstances, but I venture to propose this as the general rule, that the true function of the State is the protection of all its members in all their rights. In this I include the establishment of such public enterprises as the necessity or convenience of the public may require, but to which individual effort is unequal. If we went no further, we should have just and equal laws, the administration of justice, the public defence, the construction of public works

necessary for the common service, the education of children, and the care of those feeble members of the State who are unable to take care of themselves. I see no occasion to go further. Let me give my reasons.

The purpose of human life is human happiness, and that happiness is best promoted by the nearest approach possible to the ideal of manhood or womanhood. Individuality is the necessary condition of such development. What I do for myself suits me better and raises me higher than what somebody else may do for me. Self-help is better than the help of another, though that other be the State itself. Self-reliance is the making of man or woman. It thence follows, that what one can do for himself the State should not do for him. It is better for his own manhood that the State should leave him to act for himself.

It is better for another reason ; he can help himself in the long run, other things being equal, more effectively than if he were helped by the State. He is likely to be the best judge of his own capacities and his own wants. Each of us is a little world in himself. If my neighbour can take care of himself, so can I, and I would rather be let alone. He has probably as much as he can do to take care of himself, and can hardly take care of me too. Of course I am here stating a general principle, without stopping to explain all the exceptions. Some persons may be so feeble that they cannot help themselves, and others stronger than they must help them. Some persons may fall into such circumstances of difficulty that the aid of others is indispensable. I am speaking of adult persons of average capacity

of average health, and in ordinary circumstances. What they want, or should only want, is a "fair field and no favour."

From these several causes it has come to pass, that most men and women in the christian countries of the world have the necessaries and even the comforts of life. But what of those who have them not? What of those who, able and willing to work cannot get work, or for what they do cannot obtain wages adequate for their support. There is a considerable class of such persons, considerable in itself, though small in proportion to the rest of their fellows. How many there may be in all, it is difficult to say, but small or great in numbers, they are a reproach to our civilisation. General Booth, a competent authority, estimates the number at one-tenth of the people of this fair city; the "residuum of misery," as they are appropriately called. From these cries of poverty, and of the misery following on the heels of poverty, are loud in our ears. There is no sadder sight than that of the father of a family able and willing to work, and yet finding no work to do. He goes out in the morning, hoping to bring home to his wife and children wages that will procure them what every human being should have, a cheerful hearth and a plentiful table; but to his despair he brings them nothing but cold and hunger. We are shocked by such a picture, and exclaim that something can surely be done, something must be done, to avert such wretchedness. What shall it be? That is the problem that confronts us. The first condition of relief must be that in helping the tenth person we should not forget the other nine. What then is that measure of relief for the tenth which is

compatible with the rights of the nine ? Different measures of relief are proposed, one that the State should intervene and take into its hands all the property of the people, apportion their labour, and distribute the product as each may need ; another proposition is that instead of becoming the proprietor and sole distributor of labour and profit, the State should take under its wing those who cannot find work, and find it for them. Both of these schemes appear to me to be delusive. The first not only injuring needlessly the nine in order to help the tenth, but it ignores the history of the race, the instincts of self-love and the pride of independence ; the second, however well intended and however well administered at first, would in the end prove a bounty upon idleness. There never has been in times past, there is not now, and there never will be so far as we can discern the future, a generation having none but good men and wise. There will be greed, there will be dishonesty, there will be selfishness, there will be folly. Even the best men may differ in their views of what is right or what is expedient. The bitterest strifes, even the bloodiest wars, have been waged between rival sects of the same christian religion. Where then could be found those wisest and best of men, who are to administer all the property within the State, cultivate all the land, assign all the labour, distribute all the products ? Before what is now called nationalism could succeed, it would have to engage a company of archangels and get them to form an administration.

How far then, I may be asked, would you have the State go in its interference with private affairs. That question is already answered by stating the principle. The extent of interference in

particular countries would naturally vary according to particular circumstances. In some countries, it might be wise to take the railways into the ownership and service of the State; in others it might be unwise; in some it might be wise to let private companies build, own, and let the docks, in others unwise. When the principle is clearly stated the application must depend upon the circumstances. Help none who can help themselves, or can be helped otherwise than by the State.

Self-interest may be trusted to supply the wants of the world. Take for illustration the way in which the wants of London are supplied. This great city is abundantly supplied with all that is needed for the sustenance and comfort of life. Nothing can be desired that is not to be found in the warehouses and shops of your metropolis. Men are working for it, not alone in your own islands, but in the farthest east and the farthest west. Fishermen are tossing in stormy seas to supply your tables; western prairies are yellow with corn, destined in part for you; flocks and herds which no man can number are moving across American plains, and will make their way over the sea, for your sustenance. Is all this due to the action of government? None of it. What has done it? Individual self-interest. The government has not contributed a shilling for this gathering together from continents and islands of things to eat, to drink, to wear, and to admire. Indeed the government could not do it, if it would. If there be truth in the past history of our race, the wit of man could not contrive the means of provisioning London for a week as it is now provisioned. The commissariat of an army is one of the most difficult of all the operations of war. It would tax to

the utmost the abilities of the ablest commissary that ever lived to supply an army of five hundred thousand men moving together as one body. How much more would be required to supply five millions of men, women<sup>†</sup> and children crowded together in this Modern Babylon.

When we speak of the defence of liberty, we mean the liberty to do as we will with our own, subject of course to the restraint of the laws; we mean the liberty to eat, drink and wear, to labour at home or travel abroad, to buy and sell as we have a mind; we mean that this is a liberty of which the State cannot rightfully deprive us; and a liberty which is essential to human freedom and human happiness.

Property is as old as civilization. The patriarchs had their flocks and herds. The right to keep what we produce is, I take leave to say, inherent in every human being; for nobody can set up a better right than the producer, and the right to keep implies the right to transfer. Property may be wasted, or it may be abused; its possession may prove a curse or a blessing; it may be perverted to base uses, but the right exists nevertheless, and to have it, and keep it and transfer it cannot be taken away, without subverting the foundations of human society. There are ways of dealing with its abuses, without destroying the right. Property includes not only houses and lands and ships, but whatever may be used to obtain houses and lands and ships, that is to say, whatever may be sold or bought. A contract by means of which one may gain something of value is property, and can no more be taken away than any other kind of property. To impair the obligation of a contract is therefore

to impair the right to gain something by which the party is to live. If you have a thousand pounds of the stock of the Bank of England or in the public funds, Parliament could no more reduce the stock or funds to five hundred pounds, than it could take away from its owner a house in London without compensation. The inviolability of contracts is as sacred as the inviolability of home.

What does history teach us? If human annals give us any insight of the true function of government, they show that the happiest and most prosperous peoples have been the most free. It is an old maxim that the best government is that which governs least. This is the voice of history. When the individual has relied most on self-help and least on State-help, then he has been most happy and most prosperous. “Aide toi, et le Ciel t’aidera” is another of the maxims which teaches the same lesson.

Let us take a look into some of your English homes, that, for example, of one of your farmers. He has a comfortable farm-house where he lives with wife and children, and he has a hundred acres of land. He sees his cattle and sheep in the pastures, and his hay-ricks in the meadows. He works hard, and is obliged to practice a severe economy to make both ends meet, but he has a cheerful fireside and a sense of independence, which in itself is a source of happiness. His house is his castle. As one of your great writers has said: the king cannot enter it, the king dare not. How would this farmer like the State to take his farm and use it, directing him and his children to work there or elsewhere, as State officials might think best, and pensioning him

with such a dividend from the common earnings of the country as the same officials might consider just. Or take the case of a trained mechanic. He has a cottage, small it may be and scantily furnished, but a neat housewife and healthy children living on his well-earned wages. Would he like to exchange his independent labour for work dictated by government agents and paid for out of a common fund, which they would supervise?

It is not the function of the State to provide work for its people any more than it is to furnish them with bread, or clothing, or houses and lands. Why is it not? Because if the State does it for them, they will not do it for themselves; and if they do it for themselves they will do it better than if it were done for them. But still, then, comes the question, what if the people cannot find work; what shall be done then; shall they be left to starve? I answer, no; but there are agencies outside of the State that, in ninety-nine instances out of every hundred, will give relief better than the State can do it, but I will add, that for the hundredth instance, I would have the State intervene, yet I would not intervene until every other resource had failed, or was certain to fail.

If I were asked what I would do for the poor needlewomen who are described in Hood's "Song of the Shirt," I should answer that they too belonged to that defenceless class who are not able to take care of themselves, and, therefore, should be cared for. The law should take hold of such cases. That law is wise which prohibits human servitude. There is a servitude which is imposed upon the needy, and I would have the law interfere with that also. By what means and to what extent the

State should interfere would depend upon the circumstances of the particular case, and the progress of the experiment. The factory Acts, the Acts which prohibit the employment or the over-work of children, and other similar enactments, are clearly within the true function of the State upon the principle of help those who are unable to help themselves, but help none who are able.

Of all the means of reconciling the conflicting claims of capital and labour, I know of none comparable to that of co-operation. There is a shop called the Bon Marché in Paris, see what co-operation can do in the way of uniting interests, and, what is better still, welding hearts together. The least shop-boy is, I am told, a partaker in the general distribution of the profits, a sort of partner in the establishment. He takes no fees, he works with willing hands and a smiling face, indeed he holds up his head like the best of them. Such co-operative societies are frequent in France; and they are, I am told, not uncommon in England. What may the State do to promote co-operation? I answer, that while it should do nothing to enforce, it may do much to encourage co-operative schemes. For example, corporations are franchises granted by the State, and in granting these it may prescribe as a condition of the grant, that labour as well as capital shall be represented in the shares on just terms.

We cannot shut our eyes to the increasing uneasiness of society. Let us take courage, nevertheless. And here may I mention an anecdote of Mr. Lincoln, lately our President, or rather, the President of the Civil War. In the darkest period of that awful conflict, when some one

expressed fear of the result, he replied, as was his wont, with a little story. "One night in November, years ago, a shower of meteors fell from a clear sky; a friend standing by was frightened; I looked up and between the falling stars, I saw the fixed stars beyond, shining serene in the firmament, and I said: 'Don't let us mind the meteors.'" May we not profit by this lesson of the brave old man. Society may be fiercely shaken, but it will not fall. The family, that great primal institution which the Almighty has established for the children of men, that safeguard of society, will remain, and with it those other institutions which surround it and cling to it; there will be marrying and giving in marriage; there will come the smiles of mothers and the laugh of children, and men and women will be better and braver, as they are more and more taught self-reliance, and feel more and more the inspiration of human sympathy and human brotherhood, but they will never be made better and braver by overstraining the function of the State.

LORD WEMYSS: Ladies and gentlemen, I have now a very pleasant task to perform, and that is to thank, in your name, our friend, Mr. David Dudley Field, for the able and thoughtful address which you have just heard. You probably know that on former occasions we have had distinguished men of our own country presiding at our annual meeting. We have had my noble friend on my right, Lord Bramwell, a most distinguished and able judge, now a distinguished member of the upper House of Parliament. We have had his no less distinguished brother, Sir Frederick Bramwell, and we have had Lord

Pembroke. We have also had a once distinguished Member of Parliament, Mr. E. P. Bouverie, who was Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, than whom I have known no more honest, upright, honourable, straightforward politician. He, unfortunately, has gone from us. We have likewise had in this chair a distinguished foreigner, M. Leon Say, who came to us from that neighbouring country separated from England by that silver or leaden streak, whichever you may choose to call it. This year we have to preside over us a distinguished man, a gentleman who does not belong to England but who is still not a foreigner for he hails from the other side of the Atlantic. (Hear, hear.) He is one of our own blood, and he is an able representative of that free race which peoples the other side of the Atlantic. It was once said by, I think, Dr. Lardener, that it would be impossible for science or steam to cross the Atlantic. (Lord Bramwell: "I heard it.") Lord Bramwell heard it said in 1840 or 1844. But we find that the Atlantic, the great dividing ocean between the mother country and America, between those two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon Race, has been bridged by steam; and science has connected the two branches of this race by telegraphy and by commercial enterprizes and interests. Thus we have learnt, and our kith and kin on the other side of the ocean have learnt, that blood, in these matters, is thicker than water; and, I am sure, there is no Englishman in this country, whether he is a member of our League or not, who does not rejoice that we have had so distinguished an American as Mr. Dudley Field to preside at this meeting. (Applause.) Now, our Association has done, I hope, some good

work during the eight years of its existence. It has, in the course of its work, had to resist, not only State interference, which is so much deprecated by our friend, Mr. Dudley Field, but it has had to resist, also, Municipal interference, Municipal trading, and matters of that kind. For doing this we have been accused of being the enemies of liberty and of progress. Well, in one sense we are the enemies of liberty: we are the enemies of liberty to do evil. We are the enemies of that liberty which would break contracts. (Hear, hear.) We are the enemies of that liberty which would render property insecure by taking property, by Act of Parliament, or by the action of Municipalities, without the consent of, or without duly compensating the dispossessed individual owner. (Hear, hear.) We are the defenders of Individualism, and we are, at the same time, the defenders of liberty and property in the truest sense, as our distinguished friend, the chairman, has explained. (Applause.)

It is, I say, a great thing for us on this occasion that we, who are maligned because we really endeavour to uphold the primary basis of society, it is a great thing that we who are so maligned by those who are in favour of what is called "liberty and progress"—which really means in the long run, unless it is stopped, progress down to the Dead Sea of Socialism—it is a great thing for us to have had here to-day so distinguished and eminent a lawyer, and so able a man, as Mr. Dudley Field, who hails from the land of liberty. (Applause.) My acquaintance with Mr. Field does not date from long. It dates from our last Annual Dinner at the Freemasons' Tavern, when Mr. Field came there with Mr. Hurlbert, another distinguished American,

and an American General no less distinguished—General Crawford. I then thought it my duty, as it was my pleasure, to propose an impromptu toast—"Our American Cousins." Mr. Field responded to that toast, and when I was told that he was eighty-five I thought that so splendid a specimen of the human race I had never before seen, and what I thought of his speaking, you, who have heard him, may readily surmise. When I afterwards saw Lord Bramwell, who had gone away not knowing that Mr. Field was going to speak,—("hear, hear," from Lord Bramwell)—I told him I wished that he had stayed and heard Mr. Field, who was, in my opinion—and I did not except the G. O. M.—unquestionably the finest orator I ever heard. (Applause.) Now, Lord Bramwell has heard a little speaking in his time—forensic, parliamentary, and other oratory—and you could not have a better judge than his lordship. And what was his reply when I said this—"I quite agree with you." (Hear, hear.) I then endeavoured to induce Mr. Field before he left for America (and I think he goes to-morrow or the next day), to honour this League by taking the chair on this occasion. The result you know. I think we may receive with the utmost calmness all the gibes that are launched at us when we have in the chair at our annual meeting a gentleman such as Mr. Dudley Field, who is Commissioner appointed by the State to codify the laws of New York, who was one of the Commissioners deputed by the State to avert, if possible, the great Civil War of 1861-65, who for many years has been a leader of the United States Bar, and who is a recognised authority on international law. (Hear, hear.) Well, I say, if we feeble members of this League, who

are endeavouring in our feeble and humble way to maintain the principles that we believe to be sound, which we believe to be the very basis of the social state, not only of this but of every other country—because, as Mr. Field has said, the principles of this League are the principles that apply to every country and to every race—well, I say, we can cheerfully submit to any gibes cast upon us as being enemies of liberty and of progress, when such a distinguished man as Mr. Dudley Field honours us by taking the chair at our annual meeting, endorses our principles and comes from across the Atlantic to express views which are sound and beyond possible contravention. (Applause.) I think I may without further words thank him in your name for the able address he has given us ; and I am quite sure there is but one feeling in this room, as the applause which greeted him when he sat down showed, namely, a feeling of gratitude and thanks to him for the sound principles so ably enunciated by one who is no stranger, but one of our own kith and kin from beyond the sea. (Applause.)

LORD BRAMWELL : Ladies and gentlemen, I heartily second the vote of thanks to Mr. Field. Some thirty years ago—I am substantially correct, although it might be a year more or less—I heard a speech that I thought the very best I ever had heard, and I did not expect that I should hear another as good, and I have not for a long time, but I have to-day. I did not expect that after thirty years we should both be in a condition to meet each other on this earth, but the speaker then was Mr. David Dudley Field, and the speaker to-day is the same gentleman. (Applause.) Lord Wemyss has told you something of Mr.

Dudley Field, but, perhaps, you will let me say one or two words in addition. He was the leader of the New York Bar, and he is the author of several codes, three of which are still in force in his own State of New York, and the Code of Procedure, of which he is the author, has been adopted almost bodily in several of our own Colonies, and has been imitated by us in England in a statute you may have heard of called "The Judicature Act." You may depend upon it that, when you listen to Mr. David Dudley Field you listen to one who is an authority and entitled to speak with authority and to instruct all of us. And it is, to my mind, a most important thing that such a gentleman as Mr. Field should have the opinions that he has, and express them as he does, coming from his own country where they possess plenary liberty. Not that I believe that it exists there more heartily or thoroughly than here in England, but certainly if people are minded to have any particular thing they get it made into a law in America. It is, I say, a most important thing that he, coming from that country, should have the opinions that he has expressed to you to-day, especially when you consider the pestilent doctrines that have been preached by an American—Mr. Henry George, of whom you have heard, and who, I very much wish, could have listened to what Mr. Field told us to-day. (Hear, hear.) Ladies and gentlemen, I am not going to make you a speech, but it is a little hard upon one, after having lived all these years, and during four-fifths of the period looked upon Political Economy as one of the most important of all studies—it is a little hard upon such an one to hear Political Economy abused, but one does occasionally. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) You know Mr. Field has

been talking Political Economy to you. That you are perfectly well aware of. He has been advocating Individualism and deprecating the interference of the State. He told you that one notion was that the State should amass what could be produced and divide reasonably in equal portions amongst the people of the country, and one objection I have to that scheme (independently of all the misery, dishonesty, and blunders which would result) is that the pile to be divided would not be nearly so much as when each man was working for himself. (Applause.) Socialism will never do—I have said it before, let me say it again—until we are as honest as the bees. (Hear, hear and laughter.) They work for the common good, but, I think, if each of us had to work for the common good, I do not believe that each would work as hard or as effectually as when we were working for ourselves. I will not say that is my main reason in favour of Individualism, because I think that work at present, when we know we are going to have the reward of it, is pleasant; when we do not know that we are going to have the free produce of it, it would be intolerable—it would be wearisome beyond measure. I just mention this economical reason because I was saying to you it is rather hard to hear Political Economy abused when one has such a regard for it. The last thing I read was a statement by a gentleman that he deprecated Political Economy very much indeed, and deprecated Individualism, but thought that the State ought to interfere a very great deal more because, he said, when you have analysed the corner stone of Political Economy you find it selfishness. Now, there never was a greater mistake in this world than to suppose that Political Economy inculcates

selfishness. It does nothing of the sort. It has no more to do with selfishness or altruism than a book which teaches how to make a coat. If you bought a book which instructed you how to make a coat, but said nothing about who was to wear it, it would be foolish to say that was a selfish book, that it inculcated selfishness. That was the notion of the gentleman, however, to whom I refer. His way of putting the matter was that, if you analyse the corner stone of Political Economy, you find it to be selfishness. What would result from the analysis of a corner stone I do not know. I do not know that a corner stone was ever analysed before. (Laughter.) However, that was this gentleman's idea. I think I have shown there was some confusion of ideas in his mind. (Laughter.) Ladies and gentlemen, I am strongly convinced that the best way for this world—for the people of this world, so long as they are constituted as they are—the best way for them to seek the common happiness is to let each individual seek it after his own fashion. (Applause.) I entirely concur with everything Mr. Field has said, and heartily, as I said, second the proposal that he should be thanked for what he has said to you. (Applause.)

LORD WEMYSS: Ladies and gentlemen, I have first to lay on the table, on behalf of the Council, the Annual Report, the Report for the past year, which has been drawn up in the rough by our most able, energetic, and valuable Secretary, Mr. Crofts—(hear, hear)—and has been adopted by the Council. I shall not trouble you by dwelling upon its contents. You will see for yourselves by that report the work which this League has done and endeavoured to do. In some things we have been successful,

in others we have not. I need not trouble you with any arguments in favour of our report, the adoption of which by this Meeting will be moved by another gentleman, but I should just like to mention one matter in illustration of the state of feeling we have to deal with. As I came from Scotland this morning I read in the *Edinburgh Evening News*—a very Liberal paper—a paragraph alluding to a speech of Mr. Broadhurst's to his constituents at Nottingham, in which he spoke against the Eight Hours Bill. Well, the *Edinburgh Evening News*, in this paragraph, said that unless Mr. Broadhurst mended his ways and gave up talking against the Eight Hours Bill he would be left by the Liberal party standing high and dry by himself. That is the *Edinburgh Evening News'* warning to Mr. Broadhurst. He was not to contend for a principle which he believed to be sound and based upon common sense, but he was to yield it at once or be left standing high and dry by the Liberal party. (Laughter.) That shows the temper and spirit of the times. One word about the question of municipal trading. The other day I had occasion to go to Edinburgh to see my lawyer. The sun sets very early in Scotland at this time of year. There is not much daylight in Edinburgh between four and five in the afternoon. Well, the office of my lawyer was very dark indeed, notwithstanding the gas burners which were turned on. I remarked to him, "Your gas is very bad." He replied, "Yes, the gas is so bad since the supply was taken over by the municipality of Edinburgh." So much for municipal trading, and so it will be. That is the sort of thing this Association is formed to resist.

MAJOR CRESWELL : My lords, ladies, and gentlemen, I have the honour to move, " That the Report of the progress and work of the League during the past year, presented by the Council, be adopted." I do not think many words from me are necessary in moving this resolution, as you have already heard the policy of the League explained by its President (Lord Wemyss), you have also, I may take it, been furnished with a copy of the Report, and you have had the privilege of hearing the grand address delivered by the Honourable David Dudley Field. In that address he has pictured to you exactly the true foundation of the State, and has accurately defined its function. Now, the object of this League is to uphold individual liberty and the true function of the State, and I hope it will continue to exist and flourish for that purpose. Individual liberty is, I will not say the corner stone but the foundation stone of the entire fabric of our whole social life. You will see by this Report that the work of the League has been very great indeed. It has engaged the attention not only of the Press, but of lecturers and special agents all over the country. Why is this? Because, as has been alleged, property is attacked and threatened, and capital lacks confidence in investments. Confidence is disappearing, and why. Because of the poisonous views of socialists and demagogues which are so loudly and frequently enunciated. I should like to know, would electricity, the great inventions of chemistry and other beneficent inventions have existed in the present day if socialism had had its way in this country in the past? No. It is to individualism, to the certainty that a man will reap the full reward of his risk and enterprise, if successful, that we owe these things.

A man spends, say thousands of pounds—a quarter of a million—in carrying out an invention that will benefit the world. He risks the whole of his money upon his idea to the possible disadvantage of himself and his family. It would be a serious and unjust thing indeed, if, when success crowned his self-sacrificing effort, he were to be deprived of the full benefit of his enterprise. (Applause.) It has always been a recognised rule that a man who makes himself famous by his deeds shall be rewarded. Where would be the great men of the present, and the great merchants and manufacturers, and traders of this country if they had not been permitted to keep the rewards of their enterprise? The object of this League is to protect private enterprise against the socialistic despoiler, and to encourage the capable. At the same time, I am sure, we all feel it to be our duty to take care of the weak and helpless, those who cannot take care of themselves. The effect of all this socialism, strikes, and new unionism has been to render capital idle, and, as a consequence, Mr. Goschen has been enabled to reduce the interest on consols from 3 per cent. to  $2\frac{3}{4}$  and  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . There is too much money awaiting secure investment. Capital is cheap. Had it not been for socialistic preaching, trade unionism, and strikes, much more money would have been invested in land and industries, and much more labour would have been employed. Who would invest in land, docks, and houses when all alike were threatened with taxation so heavy as to reduce the net profit to a margin so small as to make it not worth the while of capital to invest. The result will be that, as capital finds less profitable employment, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be able to reduce the interest on consols

another  $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. ; and if things go on as they are now going he would be able to make even further reductions. This League has, I see by this Report, a great work before it. It will be its duty to oppose Bills for increasing the spending powers of two great bodies in the metropolis, whose exactions we already feel very severely. (Hear, hear.) There are other things mentioned in the Report of equal importance. I hope you will adopt the Report in its entirety and not only so, but that you will one and all—if you have not already done so—subscribe to the funds of this League, and induce your friends to become subscribers also. (Applause.) Let not the League be crippled in its good and necessary work for want of pecuniary support. For your own sake in the present, and that of your children in the future, and of your children's children, help the League to maintain those institutions which have made this country prosperous in the past and present. We can improve upon the past, but we cannot replace it by anything else. Let us improve our institutions where necessary as we go on, but do not destroy them or set up a god we have not known the benefit of. (Applause.)

THE REV. DR. CHARLTON LANE (Mercers Company), in seconding the motion, said : My lords, ladies and gentlemen, I came to this meeting for the purpose of not only supporting its great cause, but chiefly to receive a lesson in oratory : and as I was so anxious not to lose a single word of the great orator's address, I came at an early hour, and the result was I was pounced upon by the energetic secretary (Mr. Crofts) to make a speech. (Laughter and hear, hear.) I think he remembered one thing about my oratory ; that when he heard me before on a

similar occasion last year, at a time when I happened to hold an office which gave me some sort of reputation, what I said then was extremely short. Hence he, perhaps, thought it would be a good thing to get hold of me to make a speech. (Laughter.) So I am not going to say more than I did last time. I do not think, in moving this resolution, it is necessary for me to do more than advise you to read the Report, to mark it and learn it, and to distribute as many copies as you can amongst your friends, so as to get as many persons as you can to advocate the cause of this Society. I need not explain to you what the Report contains, because you can all read it for yourselves, and in fact we have heard a most excellent sermon upon this Report as the text, by Mr. Dudley Field. In that speech of his, I found, from a casual perusal of the Report, that as he went on he was simply enunciating and putting in better language—amplifying in fact—what was contained in the Report itself. Mr. Field referred to one point which is especially of great importance, namely, the necessity on the part of this League to resist too much State interference. In this connection he referred to what is called “Nationalism,” or “Nationalisation,” and remarked that if this were brought about it would be necessary for the State to be governed by a number of archangels. Even then, it occurred to me, the State would not be quite safe, because I remembered that even archangels themselves sometimes make mistakes. A very serious mistake once occurred. (Laughter.) And, besides that, I was also reminded that in this system of entirely doing away with individualism, you are not in fact doing away with it, because *naturam expellas furcâ tamen usque recurret*, you would

have in its place an individualism of jobbery which, I am perfectly certain, would supervene. (Hear, hear.) I think I have said quite enough to show that I entirely endorse all that is written in the Report, and all that has been said by our eloquent chairman, and I now simply ask you to vote for the adoption of the Report.

The motion was then agreed to.

Mr. WALTER ROWLEY, Member of Council of the Mining Association of Great Britain, in moving the re-election of retiring Members of Council, said: I do not know that we could have better evidence of the work done by the Council than is afforded by the judgment they have shewn in the selection of the gentleman who has presided at this our Annual Meeting, and delivered such a valuable address to the Members and friends of the League; and in relation to the Mining industry in which I am specially interested, I should like to add a tribute of appreciation of the very great service which Mr. Dudley Field has rendered to capital and labour, not only to the Mining industry but to every other one at home and abroad by calling attention in such clear and unmistakable language to what is the distinct and proper work of the State, and by showing that when the State goes beyond its legitimate function, which I believe to be strictly confined within the limits he has defined, viz :—preservation of the peace, and those few works which private enterprise cannot do with equal advantage and convenience to the people, it unduly interferes and harasses that individual effort so essential to the cultivation of that sense of personal responsibility which is the only true principle that can permanently promote the real prosperity and true happiness of both employer and employed.

CAPTAIN MOLESWORTH, R.N., in seconding the motion, said : I received a very kind invitation from Lord Wemyss to attend this meeting. I did not know much about the Liberty and Property Defence League until I entered this room, but I have been excessively charmed not only to hear what Mr. Field has said, but also what has fallen from Lord Wemyss. As I hope now to be allowed to become a member of this League—(applause)—I have the greatest satisfaction in seconding the resolution which has been placed in my hands. I think that as citizens it behoves us to guard against every undue infringement of liberty. Personally, I like liberty in every shape, and, amongst other kinds of liberty, I am in favour of liberty of criticism and liberty for those who want to amuse the people. (Hear, hear.) When “liberty of criticism” means, however, the making of false and scandalous charges, then I consider it is our duty—at least I consider it my duty—to interpose to prevent that kind of criticism. Hence I have to-day given instructions to the solicitors to the Royal Aquarium Company (Messrs. Richardson and Sadler) to take proceedings against a gentleman of the London County Council who has maliciously and falsely made statements to injure our property. (Applause.) As our chairman has justly said every property of individuals and societies should be protected. Although I feel constrained to make these allusions to certain members of the London County Council, let me add that I have the greatest faith in that Council proving a benefit to the metropolis when the scum is cleared off and the residuum removed from the bottom. (Laughter.) I have much pleasure in seconding the resolution.

The motion having been carried,

LORD WEMYSS said: We have nothing further now to do but to give a hearty vote of thanks to our Chairman, Mr. David Dudley Field—(applause)—and I ask you, upstanding, also to give three cheers for America.

The Meeting upstanding then gave three lusty cheers for America, and one cheer more for Mr. Field.

*Self-help versus State-help.*



# Liberty and Property Defence League,

*For maintaining Freedom of Contract, for upholding Proprietary Rights, and for resisting Socialistic Legislation, irrespective of Party Politics.*

CENTRAL OFFICES:—

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